



**Montana
Society of Engineers**

A state society of the National Society of Professional Engineers

To: Economic Affairs Interim Subcommittee
From: Stephen Smith, President, Montana Society of Engineers
RE: HB525 Review of the Board for Professional Engineers and
Land Surveyors
Date: April 20, 2012

The Montana Society of Engineers is the state chapter of the National Society of Professional Engineers. The mission of the state and national organization is to support and advance the engineering profession for the betterment of society. Through activities such as education, ethics training, and legislative networking, this organization strives to make the profession of engineering accountable to the public and to peer review. I am here today representing the MSE to provide you these comments to consider on your review of this Board.

Public health and safety: MSE believes that the Board is necessary for the citizens of Montana because engineers provide essential services to Montana to assure their health and safety. The different fields of engineering work with projects that effect every day life of all citizens. These include highways and bridges, commercial buildings, water/waste water plants, electrical and steam plants. New technologies and fields of engineering are constantly being introduced – nanotechnology and complex computerized control systems are current examples you may have heard of. Engineers in these developing fields will also affect everyday lives of people in Montana. The public assumes, and has a right to expect, that the facilities they regularly use are designed and built with their safety in mind. The Board is necessary to maintain the standards of the engineers currently practicing in the profession, and develop new ones for developing technologies.

Important role to licensed engineers: The Board holds key duties related to the engineering profession. The Board sets the qualifications of applicants and the standards of examination for licensing; the Board sits in judgment in hearings for the

suspension, revocation, or denial of a license; and the Board requires, verifies and audits continuing education as precondition for renewing licensing. The Board and the Department of Labor provides services to engineers and the general public such as administering licensing processes, maintaining lists and license information for the public, and runs the Board's hearing processes. These are essential duties to maintain the quality of engineering services.

Importance of licensing engineers: MSE and NSPE encourage the licensing of engineers. Licensing insures the public and the practitioner doing business in the Montana that minimum qualifications for the duties of an engineer are met, that the capabilities are maintained through continuing education, and that commitment to the ethical practice of putting public health and safety as the first priority are enforced. The government regulation of these duties insures the public that this is being done in a fair and accountable manner.

Unique capabilities of the Board: The Board, with representations of the public and practicing engineers, under the administration of the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, is the unique body to administer these essential functions. This Board is the only real avenue in which professional issues and complaints against practitioners may be fairly resolved.

Speaking for the members of MSE, and most practicing professional engineers in the state, we support the continued structure and function of the Board. The MSE concludes that the Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors meets the criteria of the HB525 legislative review because it "meets a public purpose."